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Lansing nun honored with highest papal award

Lansing -- Sister Monica Kostielney, president and chief executive officer of the Michigan Catholic Conference, has received the highest papal award given to lay persons or clergy, the conference announced Friday.

The Holy Cross Pro-Ecclesia et Pontifice, meaning "for church and pontiff," was awarded by Pope Benedict XVI. It was presented Sept. 8 by the Most Rev. Earl Boyea, bishop of the Diocese of Lansing, who recommended her for the honor.

Kostielney has served the Michigan Catholic Conference in a variety of positions for 38 years, working to influence public policy on abortion, assisted suicide and other matters. She plans to retire Nov. 15.

Troopers' traffic stop nets 400 pounds of marijuana

Paw Paw-- Michigan State Police troopers discovered 400 pounds of marijuana with a street value of about \$500,000 in a minivan during a traffic stop Thursday along Interstate 94 in Van Buren County.

Troopers from the Paw Paw post were patrolling I-94 in Antwerp Township around 2:15 p.m. when they pulled over a minivan for careless driving.

Police say the 28-year-old driver was headed to Detroit. He's being held in the county jail, awaiting arraignment.

Appeals court refuses to stop child care unionization

Lansing-- The Michigan Court of Appeals again has rejected a lawsuit seeking to stop the unionization of 40,000 at-home child care providers.

The appeals court says the Department of Human Services can't ignore the results of a certified union election. But the court also said Thursday there are other options, including a new lawsuit with different defendants.

The Mackinac Center for Public Policy sued on behalf of three women who say the union is illegal because child-care providers are independent business owners, not public employees.

A separate lawsuit is pending in federal court.

Woman hurt in fraternity house fall leaves hospital

Kalamazoo-- An 18-year-old woman who was critically hurt in a fall from a balcony during a party at a Western Michigan University fraternity has left the hospital after three weeks.

Jordyn Sanderson of Portland was taken to Bronson Methodist Hospital on Sept. 1, after falling about 10

feet from a second-floor balcony at the Sigma Pi fraternity house and striking her head.

Kalamazoo police say Sanderson's blood alcohol level was 0.18 percent, twice the level considered drunk under state law. Kalamazoo officials, meanwhile, closed the house, and the university suspended the fraternity.

Flint area clergy press candidates for more debates

Flint- A group of area clergy are calling on gubernatorial candidates Rick Snyder and Virg Bernero to hold more debates and to make sure Flint is a possible host.

Snyder, a Republican, and Bernero, a Democrat, have agreed to only one debate, Oct. 10, at Detroit's public television station in Wixom.

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